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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [MARR](#) [PINS](#) [HN](#)  
SUBJECT: (C) FORMER MINISTER OF SECURITY OSCAR ALVAREZ TO  
BE PEPE LOBO'S VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Classified By: Ambassador Charles A. Ford, Reasons 1.4 (b & d)

¶1. (C) On April 7 the Ambassador met with Oscar Alvarez, the enormously popular former Minister of Security under President Ricardo Maduro. Alvarez told the Ambassador that Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo had asked him to be his running mate, and he had accepted, effectively stopping rumors that former Central Bank President Maria Elena Mondragon would round out Lobo's ticket. Alvarez said Lobo would be creating three "hubs" of issues if elected -- Security, Economic and Social -- and that the Vice President would be in charge of security. Alvarez predicted President of Congress Roberto Micheletti would easily win the Liberal Party primary, and warned that President Manuel Zelaya may try to create a crisis within the National Register of Persons (RNP) a few months before the general elections in order to extend his mandate past 2009. End summary.

¶2. (C) on April 7, Ambassador met with former Minister of Security Oscar Alvarez, to discuss the general political atmosphere. Alvarez still remains enormously popular, and could play a key role in the upcoming presidential elections. Alvarez told us that Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo had asked him to be his vice presidential running mate, which he accepted. He is currently serving as vice-consul at the Honduran consulate in Houston, where he re-located following the National Party defeat in the 2005 elections, but stated he will be returning to Honduras in July to concentrate on the campaign. Based on the decisive actions he took against criminals as Minister, Alvarez still fears for his family's safety and said he will leave his wife and youngest child in the United States so that his son can finish high school.

Lobo's Vision

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¶3. (C) Alvarez said that the Maduro administration had done such a good job on curbing crime that when Lobo began his campaign in 2004, security was no longer the "hot" issue of the day. Unfortunately, Lobo did not realize this in time and spent too much time and energy on security issues during the campaign. Following four years of a Zelaya administration, however, security has once again risen to be one of the citizenry's biggest concerns, so Alvarez told us that if elected, Lobo would create a type of "Department of Homeland Security" under the Vice President that would include the Ministries of Security, Defense, Governance and

Jutice, and the Public Ministry. Alvarez said Lobo could also task key trusted advisors to take on the cross-cutting issues of economics and social issues, basically creating three "hubs" the government would address. Alvarez said Lobo was worried the USG would view his attention to social issues as cause for concern, but the Ambassador reassure him that the USG would view attention to poverty alleviation and investing in people positively as long as the government stayed within the generally accepted rules of democratic behavior and did not take any rash measures such as violating private property rights or sound macroeconomics principles.

#### Observations on the Liberal Party and Zelaya

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14. (C) Alvarez said that President of Congress Roberto Micheletti will win the Liberal Party primary because he controls the party apparatus, which controls the individual voting tables around the country. He said that current vice president Elvin Santos was tricked into declaring his candidacy by President Manuel Zelaya, and will be sacrificed by Zelaya in order to get Micheletti to give him key positions on the next Supreme Court and the next Congress. Alvarez was pleased, however, that Santos has thrown his hat in the ring for president, as he said that it could pave the way for him to run in the future, if he so chooses. Alvarez predicted that Zelaya would create a crisis, most likely in the National Registry of Persons (RNP), in the last months of his administration in an attempt to remain in power. Alvarez was worried that Zelaya might try to manipulate the good relations he has built up with the armed forces by giving soldiers three salary raises in the past two years in order to carry out his nefarious plan, but was pleased when the Ambassador related his conversations with Chief of Defense Romeo Vasquez Velasquez on this topic. (Note: Vasquez has

told the Ambassador repeatedly he would support the constitution in the face of a constitutional crisis. End note.)

15. (C) Alvarez, a former employee at the embassy, worked very closely with the USG as Minister of Security. Known in the press as the "show man," he included dozens of journalists on his ministry's payroll. Human rights activists have questioned his record, noting that "suicides" and fires occurred regularly in the prisons during his mandate. Former Foreign Minister Milton Jimenez publicly criticized the proposed naming of Alvarez to a diplomatic posting, but was overruled by President Zelaya, perhaps suggesting Alvarez' knowledge of Zelaya's hidden past.

#### Comment

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16. (C) Alvarez is a popular figure who will bring prestige to the Lobo ticket. We had heard Lobo would be asking former Central Bank President under Maduro, Maria Elena Mondragon, to be his vice presidential running mate, but it looks like now she will have to settle for being in charge of the "Economic hub" of Lobo's administration if he is elected. Lobo is slowly amassing a qualified and intelligent team, and his candidacy seems almost completely assured. Micheletti, on the other side, is also slowly cementing his candidacy by bringing in new people, including a large number of mayors that had originally sided with Santos, to his team. In conjunction with his extensive funds obtained through his control of congress, Micheletti's team will put up a good fight against Lobo. At this point, the race is still too close to call. End comment.

Ford